



August 2004

# GSL ONLINE

*Montana's premiere student loan publication*

[www.mgslp.state.mt.us](http://www.mgslp.state.mt.us) (800) 537-7508

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS:

- *Labor Day: Sept. 6, (Office Closed)*
- *Fall College Tour: Sept. 13-20*
- *DE Training: Sept. 20, Missoula*

The Montana  
Guaranteed Student  
Loan Program  
provides financial  
access to  
students pursuing  
postsecondary  
educational goals.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- The Director's Den*  
*NASFAA Conference*  
*ScholarNet™ Enhancements*  
*MASFAA Members Elected*  
*Destination Imagination*  
*New Faces, Promotions & Accomplishments*  
*Focus on Financial Aid Folks*

## THE DIRECTOR'S DEN - REAUTHORIZATION

Summer is coming to an end, students are returning to school, and financial aid offices will soon be swamped! But it's what we live for, right? Something that I live for is improving access in Montana. When I took over as Director of MGSLP, a goal I set for myself and GSL was to provide actual need-based aid to the residents of our state. I'm extremely proud to announce the first distribution of MGSLP Grants. During the month of August, GSL will disburse a total of \$200,000 to our schools. These grants go to every school in Montana eligible to participate in the state's Montana Higher Education Grant program. The number of full-time, undergraduate resident students on your respective campuses determines your individual amount.

On the Reauthorization front, I have little new to report. The month of August is typically used for a summer break – which means there are only a few days left in September for anything to actually happen. At this stage, the most likely scenario is that we operate without being 'authorized'. After the elections in November, we might see a push by Congress to tackle Reauthorization. I suspect it'll take until Spring (notice I didn't say Spring of what year) before Reauthorization gets wrapped up. In the mean time, we'll need to keep a close eye on a potential Budget Balancing Bill that could be used as a quick fix for those areas that needed to be addressed in Reauthorization. These 'quick fixes' aren't always in the best interest of students and schools. Stay tuned for more.....

*Bruce Marks, Director*

## NASFAA CONFERENCE INCLUDES MASFAA CONTINGENT

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators conference was held in Minneapolis, July 18-21 and included a Montana contingent of twenty-one MASFAA members. The theme of the conference, "Helping Students Make It After All!" was appropriate for the Montana group, who has always been committed to providing access to post secondary education for all students. The MASFAA reps included nine different Montana schools, as well as members of the associate sector. General sessions as well as numerous breakout sessions were offered including technology, regulatory and professional development related sessions that were invigorating as well as informative. The 2005 NASFAA conference will be held in New York City, July 3-6, 2005.

## Returning Funds with ScholarNet™

At MGSLP, we have a commitment to improve our products and services, making the student loan process as convenient and user-friendly as possible.

We recently evaluated the methods for returning Title IV funds for our schools and tried to simplify the process. Schools have varied processes in place and we would like to offer an additional option to return funds. Returns can now be done directly in ScholarNet. Basically this would mean the FAO would do a return transaction on ScholarNet, which would create a report at MGSLP of each individual refunded and the total dollar amount. The disbursement technicians would then auto debit (or whatever method is preferred by the school's Business Office) the school's account based on the report for the total disbursement amount to be returned.

We have made some visits and had a very favorable reaction to the new option. If you would like further information, please contact Carie Kelly or Caroline Rand @ 1-800-537-7508.

## MASFAA Members Elected as RMASFAA Officers



Congratulations to MASFAA members, Kris Dramstad (MSU-Northern) and Keith Carparelli (Student Assistance Foundation) who were elected as officers for the Rocky Mountain Association of Financial Aid Administrators. Kris is the newly elected Secretary and Keith will be the Associate Member Delegate. In addition, MGSLP alum and former University of Great Falls Financial Aid Director, Sally Schuman, now of the University of Wyoming, is the President-Elect. Congratulations Sally!

## DESTINATION IMAGINATION



On behalf of Helena Destination Imagination, and as coaches of one of the Helena teams able to attend Destination Imagination Global Finals in Knoxville, Tennessee, we would like to thank the Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program for your generous donation during our recent fund-raising effort. Donations like yours enable Helena teams to compete against the best problem solving teams in the nation and the world. This invaluable experience will help them as they finish their education and move forward in their careers. The camaraderie they build as a team, and the friendships they develop with other teams at Global Finals, reinforce the importance of working together toward a common goal.

After winning the state competition, the Helena High School/Helena Middle School team of Matt Downhour, Charlie Evanson, Taylor Walsh, JoAnna Nelson and Siobhan Kirkpatrick finished 12th out of 56 teams in the global competition in their high school division. A very young team with two sophomores, two freshmen and an eight-grader, they have an excellent chance of going even further next year if they so choose.

All the kids and the coaches of Helena Destination Imagination deeply appreciate your interest in this program. Thank you for all your support.

-Janice and Stewart Kirkpatrick

# NEW

## FACES, PROMOTIONS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### New Faces:

- Debra Reed, Chief Dull Knife, Financial Aid Assistant
- Joe Massman, MSU-Billings, Administrative Support, Customer Service
- Maria McKinney, MSU-Bozeman, Administrative Support-Work Study
- Horce John Littlesun IV, born January 2 to Debra Reed, Chief Dull Knife
- Bryson Ralph Robinson, born June 2, proud grandmother Kris Dramstad, MSU-Northern

### Promotions:

- Brandi Payne, MSU-Bozeman, Director of Financial Aid
- Jackie Swain, Salish Kootenai College, Associate Director of Financial Aid/Loan Officer
- Sharon Molyneaux, MSU-Bozeman, Financial Aid Specialist, Customer Service Lead

### Accomplishments:

- Alice Ryan, Montana Tech, 20-year service award
- Haven Gourneau, Fort Peck Community College, M.B.A. from Gonzaga University May 2004, and recently accepted as an MSI Leadership Fellow for future leaders of minority institutions
- Melina Hawkins, MSU-Billings, 25-year service award
- Jackie Swain, Salish Kootenai College, awarded the USA Funds Excellence in Debt Management award for \$1500 in scholarships for SKC students. The award recognizes the intense student and borrower intervention program developed through a partnership with SKC and MGSLP to lower the school's default rate.

### Well Wishes:

- Tammy McKee, UM-Missoula, moved to Florida

As you welcome new faces into your offices and lives, take steps up on the career ladder and reach milestones, we would like to recognize you. Email Libby Siebens@mgslp.state.mt.us with any updates for the next newsletter.

### Words of Wisdom:

*"If someone is going down the wrong road, he doesn't need motivation to speed him up.  
What he needs is education to turn him around."*

--Jim Rohn

## FOCUS ON FINANCIAL AID FOLKS



Ricki Jones, Financial Aid Specialist,  
University of Montana-Western

The atmosphere is more like a tropical jungle. Large, leafy plants adorn the periphery. The sound of running water emanates from the corner and I glance twice at the astonishing number of fish housed in each tank. Before I sit down she asks if I'd like to take a few home with me. From the outside it looks like an ordinary financial aid office, but there is nothing ordinary about the women inside.

Ricki Jones, financial aid specialist at The University of Montana-Western, is known for her sense of humor, easy laugh and dedication to helping students. Before coming to UM-Western in 1998, she taught for a year at the Helena Art Center, managed a convenience store for five years, and worked for an attorney and a CPA. "Financial aid is my dream job – I love it! Although packaging makes me grumpy."

Together with her spouse of 16 years, Blain Wenger, she enjoys hunting, fishing, cooking, reading, watching sports, traveling to blues festivals and golf. "I love golf, but am, admittedly, a hacker with pathetic skills." While painting and pottery are also on her list of hobbies, she rarely has the time since going back to school. "I will have my MBA from UM by May 2005 even if they have to tape the diploma to my headstone."

Favorite Quote: "It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice."

-R.J. Micho, Blues musician